

FROM MONROE TO RIO

By CRIOLLO

The Pan-American Conference which took place in January in Rio de Janeiro is a milestone in the history of the Americas. But as it occurred at a time when all attention was riveted on the recent outbreak of the Pacific war, relatively little notice was taken of it in the Far East. We have asked someone who is thoroughly acquainted with South America to write an article describing not so much the detailed proceedings of the Conference as the place taken by the Conference in the framework of the entire foreign policy of the Americas.—K.M.

The opening-up of the Americas for world politics and world economics was the work of Europeans, above all that of Dutch, English, Irish, Spanish, and Portuguese conquerors. Gradually the white people populating the vast spaces of North, Central, and South America and their descendants born in America, who had in part intermarried with the native Indian population, ceased to feel as Europeans.

The colonial period of the Americas, directed in all its activities towards Europe and rich in heroic and cruel deeds of white and Indian warriors, traders, farmers, and adventurers, was followed by the period of "liberation." The North Americans were the first to declare their independence of England. Later the Central and South Americans, who up to the foundation of the Latin American states had been subjects of the Spanish Crown, declared their independence.

Then came a period of the inner development of the American republics, which differ widely from each other. Thanks to a number of favorable factors, among which a comparative racial homogeneity was not the least important, the United States of North America were the first to take on definite shape. Other American states followed and gradually entered into world politics.

MONROE AND WASHINGTON

In order not to allow the national development of the American continent to be impeded from outside, especially from Europe, the United States President Monroe proclaimed in 1823, prompted by fear of Russia, the doctrine named after him but actually conceived by his predecessor, President Jefferson. The purport of its contents in a few words is: no interference on the part of Europe in American affairs. Thus Washington's doctrine that the United States should avoid entangling herself in the politics of Europe was supplemented.

As for the remaining possessions in the Americas of the European powers, especially of England, Holland, and France, the American countries had to make the best of it. The last great European attempt to gain a foothold in the Americas in opposition to the Monroe Doctrine was the proclamation of Maximilian of Hapsburg as Emperor of Mexico under the protection of French bayonets. Apart from Italy, the only important European nation that has never sought to violate the Monroe Doctrine is Germany. Even after the founding of the Second Reich in 1871, when for the first time the German flag was raised overseas, no attempts were ever made to acquire colonies in the Americas. On the other hand, quantities of German settlers

streamed into North and South America. Germans participated decisively in the formation and solidification of the young American states, their politics, economics, and culture. Germany has never derived political rights from this.

FIRST WARPED, THEN DISCARDED

From the doctrine proclaimed by Monroe there gradually developed the habit of the United States of holding the remaining republics of the Western Hemisphere in tutelage. This led to resistance on the part of the Latin American states which deteriorated into violent political and even belligerent conflicts. This resistance was the determining factor in the foreign policy of the American continent approximately up to the Great War. Decisive blows dealt by the powerfully rising United States to the Latin American states, shaken by continual revolutions, were, first the war against Mexico, which considerably decreased the territory of that country, and then the construction of the Panama Canal, which placed the Central American states, with the exception of Mexico, in complete dependence on the United States.

The meaning of the Monroe Doctrine had already been warped as a result of the attitude of North America towards Latin America. When the United States and a number of Latin American states in her train declared war in 1917 on Germany and her allies, the doctrine itself was simply disregarded. The powerful American branch of international high finance had chained its interests to the Allies and attempted to save its investments by drawing the American people, contrary to its natural interests, into a war against the Central Powers. The sound economic relations between Latin America and Germany were abruptly broken off. After the end of the war normal trade relations began to be taken up again between Germany and Latin America, especially South America. These relations were in accordance with the

natural complementing of the trade partners.

A NEW POLICY IS BORN

The growing exchange of goods, based on absolutely equal rights, between Germany and the Latin American republics was a thorn in the flesh of the United States. Her foreign policy, being, as it was, mainly in the service of finance-capitalistic interests, hence sought to disturb the natural economic policy of South America and to replace it by an artificial North American predomination. This policy, aptly characterized by the Americans themselves with the name of "Dollar Diplomacy," has been applied with varying success. It was camouflaged as "Pan-American" by a sudden change of direction in the official North American foreign policy toward the Latin American countries.

In 1928 President Hoover introduced a policy inspired by feelings of goodwill toward Latin America. This policy culminated, for the time being, in the Pan-American Conference in 1936 in Buenos Aires. Meanwhile F. D. Roosevelt had become President, and he went to Buenos Aires himself. With the catchword of the "Good Neighbor Policy" he succeeded in making a breach in the wall of suspicion which had been raised, mainly under the leadership of Argentina, against the obscure plans of the USA.

"THE BIG BAD WOLF"

The policy of Buenos Aires was continued at the Pan-American Conference in Lima in 1938. Again Argentina opposed the United States with a number of reservations, pointing to the close economic and cultural ties between South America and Europe. It was at that time that the United States, led by President Roosevelt, began, to a growing degree, to participate in the international political encirclement of Germany, which, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, had regained her inner and foreign political freedom of action

and her independence of the plutocracy of America. The slogan "Fifth Column," that legendary world-wide organization of German sabotage agents and conspirators, was carried into the political discussions of Latin America with a large expenditure of money and printer's ink. This visibly poisoned the atmosphere of peaceful exchange of goods and ideas which had existed between Germany and South America. At the cost of Germany, which was denounced as a danger to the entire American continent, the United States tried to strengthen the feeling of Pan-American solidarity.

The outbreak of the present war saw the United States from the very beginning in the camp of Germany's opponents. At the Pan-American Conference of Panama, called after the outbreak of war, the American republics agreed to maintain their neutrality in the present war. The neutrality of the United States had long since degenerated into an empty formula and was no longer seriously desired.

WAR AND THE AMERICAS

A number of questions arising in the course of the war and touching upon the interests of the American countries led to a further Pan-American Conference being called in Havana in 1940. The United States now sought to mobilize the energies of the Latin American states for her policy of moral and material aid to England, which shortly afterwards culminated in the announcement of the Lend and Lease Bill. In the Declaration of Havana, contrasts between the democratic-liberal ideas of America and the so-called totalitarian ideas of some European states were high-lighted for the first time. The Conference of Havana was the prelude to the open war policy of the United States. With the use of extremely elastic principles she was seeking to assure herself of the aid of Latin America. By various means the numerous voices of reason which were raised on the whole American continent were persecuted or even silenced.

Japan's decision to meet the growing provocation on the part of the USA with war, and the end of Germany's patience towards the belligerent acts of the supposedly neutral United States, caused the latter to organize yet another Pan-American Conference, this time in Rio de Janeiro, in order to establish the attitude of all American republics in the face of the state of war between the United States and her Central American and Caribbean satellites on the one hand, and Germany, Italy, and Japan on the other. Meanwhile Colombia and Venezuela had been the first South American states to break off their diplomatic relations with the Axis. What the United States desired was at least the rupture of the relations of all other American states with the Axis powers, as a first step toward the entry of the whole American continent into the war. Argentina opposed the North American intentions most decidedly, particularly any collective rupture of relations. After lively negotiations, partly held behind locked doors, the Rio Conference agreed on a compromise formula consisting of three articles.

A COMPROMISE IS REACHED

In Article I the American republics agree to consider any act of aggression of a non-American state against an American state as an act of aggression against all.

In Article II they emphasize their joint determination to help and protect each other in such a case until the effects of aggression should have disappeared from the continent.

In Article III the American republics recommend the rupture of diplomatic relations with Germany, Italy, and Japan in such a manner as may be determined by the laws, the special circumstances, and the geographical position of each individual country.

Articles I and II are so formulated that they provide a joint reaction of the American states only if American

territory, that is, territory of the Western Hemisphere, is attacked. So far there has been no such attack. Neither the Philippines, nor the Hawaiian Islands, nor Guam, Wake, or Midway Island can be considered as part of the Western Hemisphere, that is, as American territory.

FREEDOM OF ACTION AND "SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES"

Article III was the most disputed of all. When the United States realized that she could not accomplish a collective declaration of war of all American countries against the Axis, she retreated a step and demanded the unconditional rupture of diplomatic relations. The compromise solution of Article III shows that not even this goal could be achieved. Rather does Article III contain a number of extremely important reservations which take into account the Argentinian attitude. Within certain limits the freedom of action of the South American states has been preserved, at least in form. The limits named are the constitution, the special circumstances, and the geographical position of the individual countries. In practice this means that in Chile, for example, the government was to await the presidential elections before coming to a final decision. In Argentina, Parliament will insert itself as a controlling factor.

"Special circumstances" obtain in those states which are under military pressure from the United States. The insertion of this term hence means no more than that those states that have already lost their freedom cannot claim any freedom of action towards Germany, Italy, and Japan. The term "geograph-

ical position" is elastic. It can mean that a country like Chile, for instance, with its extensive and unprotected Pacific coast is not expected to break off relations with Japan, the greatest naval power in the Pacific.

THE EFFECTS OF RIO

Meanwhile the obscure position created by the compromise accepted in Rio de Janeiro has been somewhat clarified. With the exception of Argentina and Chile, all South American states have broken off diplomatic relations with the Axis powers. The United States is leaving no stone unturned to persuade Argentina and Chile to take this step and to see that the rupture of relations is followed by the formal declaration of war by all American countries.

In Rio de Janeiro the ideas of Monroe have finally been buried. President Roosevelt believes that he can unfurl the banners of war also in the southern part of the Western Hemisphere, which in its past history has been troubled least by Germany, Italy, and Japan and most by North America. Roosevelt's pace-setters in South America overestimate their power if they believe that the war potential of the Allies has in any way been strengthened by the measures following the Rio Conference, or that Germany's position has been in the least weakened. On the ruins of Roosevelt's policy free peoples and states will one day arise in South America who will take up again the best tradition of the American heroes of liberty and will help to resume and to foster the relations with the free peoples of the new Europe.